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## Speakers focus on growth, planning

A.V. chamber's efforts to inform of growth viewed by some with suspicion

By LEROY STANDISH/Staff Writer

APPLE VALLEY — In the last few months some Town Council members have come to question the motives of the Apple Valley Chamber of Commerce.

A recent series of speakers sponsored by the chamber have dealt with issues of growth and proper planning. At least two members of the Town Council say it is an indication the chamber is going astray from the majority of residents who want to keep the town's rural characteristics. The chamber says it is just doing its job by informing businesses of the imminent growth and making them aware of ways to plan for that eventuality.

"It appears to me that the chamber of commerce has an agenda to promote high-density housing and they see it — by bringing pro-development speakers — as a way to spread the word," said Councilman Mark Shoup. "I suppose that those outside our community are trying to get us to do something we don't want to do and I hope the chamber of commerce realizes that the community is prepared to fight."

Janice Moore, CEO/president of the chamber, said the chamber's focus has nothing to do with the 1999 voter approved Measure N, which mandates single family homes are built on lots of half an acre or greater.

"Our community is going to grow, we are going to go through the pains of growth, but there is going to be opportunity for economic development," Moore said.

She said each of the speakers — noted economist Dr. John Husing, Director of Housing and Community Development Lucetta Dunn and the Director of Community Development for the **Southern California Association of Governments Lynn Harris** — have offered vital information about the future.

"Each one talks to us about the opportunity we have here in the High Desert to take advantage of growth if we desire it and plan for it," Moore said.

Harris, the chamber's most recent guest on Monday, focused on preparing for a population boom over the next 25 years. She advised business leaders in attendance to focus on coordinating housing with transportation centers and develop the areas potential as an inland transportation and shipping hub.

"Our growth forecasts show that we are going to have 6.2 million more people (in the six county Southern California area) by 2030," Harris said.

The plan she was promoting, called the Compass Plan, was developed by SCAG last year. "The Compass Plan calls for more of a concentration of growth," she said.

She urged those attending to push for the development of the area as an inland port, calling it a "major opportunity" produced from growth. "This is the industry of the new millennium," Harris said.

Councilman Bob Sagona, who along with Shoup has not attended any of the discussions, said the chamber is trying to influence the community through its lineup of speakers. "They are trying to inject their influence," Sagona said. "I think their agenda doesn't seem to very strongly support the pristine community of Apple Valley and the two (homes) to the acre position of this council, they have skirted the issue, but I am convinced they are no friend of two to the acre."

Sagona went on to say he has been hearing from members of the community that the chamber is overstepping its bounds.

"They are trying to be some kind of elected body in the minds of many in the community. I think they are giving that impression," Sagona said. "Most people that I talk to are very aggravated by them trying to be another Town Council."

Moore said the chamber is only being responsible to its members by bringing them educated speakers who can address pertinent issues. "The chamber does not run away from controversial issues," Moore said. "We have growth, so what are the advantages of this? You can't stop it, so what are the opportunities of this? Our community can thrive with growth. It doesn't have to be something that is perilous. This is something that can add to our quality of life."

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